

NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



CITY OF SIOUX FALLS GIFTS LAND FOR STATE VETERANS CEMETERY

On Monday evening, Sioux Falls City Council members voted 8-0 approving the ordinance to gift land to the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs for a state veterans cemetery.

SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman and Deputy Secretary Pollard attended the council meeting and took the opportunity to thank Sioux Falls and its leadership for the gifting of 60 acres of land. Mayor Tenhaken signed the ordinance after the council had the second reading and passed the issue unanimously.

In the coming weeks, SDDVA staff will be meeting with representatives from the National Cemetery Administration, Office of State Engineer and the design team to discuss the project moving forward.

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SD BATTALION NAMED MOST OUTSTANDING ARMY GUARD UNIT

A South Dakota Army National Guard battalion received the Gen. Walter T. Kerwin, Jr. Award as the most outstanding Army National Guard battalion in the nation at an Oct. 3 ceremony in Washington, D.C.

The 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion received the award recognizing the top performing Army National Guard and Army Reserve units in the country at the annual conference of the Association of the U.S. Army.

The Pierre-based 152nd CSSB demonstrated excellence in operational planning, execution of training and maintaining high readiness standards above all other Army National Guard units for training year 2017.

Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Forces Command, presented the award to Lt. Col. Tim Schlotterback, 152nd battalion commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Eric Jennings.

The 152nd CSSB is currently preparing for an upcoming deployment to the Middle East, where they will provide command and control of logistical missions in support of U.S. forces in the region.

To be eligible for the award, units must achieve readiness objectives as outlined by U.S. Army Forces Command.

Evaluation criteria for the award include the areas of assigned personnel strength, percentage of personnel qualified in their duty position, attendance at monthly drill weekends and annual training, individual weapons qualification and physical fitness test scores, as well as an effective maintenance program.

The 152nd CSSB provides mission command and supervision for five units with about 520 Soldiers in seven communities throughout South Dakota. They assist assigned units in meeting training, administrative and logistical requirements to maintain the unit's readiness in support of their state and federal missions.

Units under the 152nd CSSB's command include: Headquarters and Headquarters Company in Pierre; the 730th Area Support Medical Company in Vermillion; the 740th Transportation Company in Milbank and its detachment in Aberdeen; the 1742nd Transportation Company in Sioux Falls and its detachment in Flan-dreau; and the 147th Army Band in Mitchell.

The Kerwin Award was first established in 1976 after the former U.S. Army vice chief of staff who served as the first commander of U.S. Army Forces Command. The command was responsible for ensuring the readiness and training of all Army units in the United States.

Kerwin was a strong advocate of the "One Army" or "Total Army" concept that recognized the important role of the National Guard and Army Reserve. The programs he initiated resulted in a significant improvement in the readiness of reserve components.



MEDAL OF HONOR SERIES

Netflix's upcoming Medal of Honor, set to debut on Nov. 9, chronicles the extraordinary lives and deeds of eight service members awarded the nation's highest commendation for valor. At first glance, it looks like a gut-punch of a documentary series, replete with visceral combat scenes and war stories recalled in painful detail. But the show seems to be just as much about the men who earned the medal as it is the medal itself.

Through a mix of archival footage, cinematic recreations, and commentary from historians, military leaders, and veterans, the series follows the recipients into heavy combat and then back home, where emotional interviews with friends and family members - and, in some cases, the recipients themselves - complete the stories of how each Medal of Honor was earned and the breadth of sacrifices entailed.

"When you read citations of [Medal of Honor] recipients, often times it would not be farfetched to think to yourself there is no way this person could have done this," Mike Dowling, a Marine Corps veteran of Iraq and the technical advisor for the series, told Task & Purpose. "Only they did do that, and their stories deserve to be told."



Dowling was one of a handful of military veterans who were involved in the production of the show, which premieres ahead of Veterans Day, either behind the scenes or as actors. "It was important to this team that the veteran community be involved in helping tell these stories," Dowling said.

Three of the recipients featured in the series - Sylvester Antolak, Edward Carter, and Vito Bertoldo - were awarded the medal for actions in World War II; two - Hiroshi "Hershey" Miyamura and Joseph Vittori - in Korea; Richard L. Etchberger in Laos in 1968; and two - Ty Carter and Clint Romesha - during the infamous 2009 Battle of Kamdesh in eastern Afghanistan.



"Everything we did that day, we didn't do it because we hated the enemy," Romesha says in a trailer for the series. "Combat is not a great thing to be in, and it's not a motivation to hate, by no means. It's a motivation to love your brothers."

SDNA SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM RECEIVES AWARD

The South Dakota Army National Guard Substance Abuse Program received the Secretary of Defense Community Drug Awareness Award at the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes, in Arlington, Va., Oct. 18.

The award, established in 1990 in an effort to promote community drug awareness efforts in the DoD community, is presented annually to the best drug demand reduction program for the previous fiscal year within each service, the National Guard, the defense agencies and field activities.

While the SDARNG SAP target audience is military service members, it has expanded to a diverse population of youth and adults throughout the state through its involvement with military families, military youth and community coalitions.

Program staff is involved with all youth K-12 in Character Counts initiatives, Students Against Destructive Decisions and Red Ribbon Week activities.

Support is provided to adults through town hall events and coalition partnerships. Engaging with the elderly occurs during Prescription Drug Take Back events in communities across South Dakota.

"Receiving this award is significant to the South Dakota Army National Guard Substance Abuse Program because it shows how important it is that to truly combat the substance issues in your area it takes a community," said Kristi Palmer, alcohol and drug control officer with the SDARNG's SAP. "This award shows the collaboration with various community coalitions and community-based organizations is what it takes to cre-

ate environmental change in the area of substance abuse."

Award criteria included: maximizing the use of department demand reduction resources to effectively reach the targeted audience; participation in Red Ribbon Week observances; and program impact and achievements.

"It's clear this program has implemented many activities that help keep our soldiers and young children drug and alcohol free," Palmer said. "Although awards give some meaning for our efforts with the Soldiers and youth, the lasting award comes from the smile on the faces of the youth, showing a soldier that what they do has made a difference."



A BIG THANK YOU TO THE 727TH TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) of South Dakota sends a big shout out of thanks to the 727th Transportation Committee for hosting the outstanding 14th Annual Charity Poker Run this year. The Run garnered \$42,000 for the DAV Hospital Transportation Network which provides rides for veterans to the VA Health Care Systems and VA Clinics.

This year's record donation of \$42,000, brings the total contribution of \$225,000 in fourteen years from the Annual Poker Run.

The DAV expresses their thanks with the community of Brookings and the patriotic citizens who participated and provided donations in this year's event.

The money raised by the 727th Transportation Committee will be used to assist veterans in South Dakota who served and sacrificed for our great country.

In FY 2017, the DAV Hospital Transportation Network in South Dakota provided rides for 8,160 veterans, with 18,609 volunteer hours by drivers, and 487,677 miles driven. Since the Transportation Program began in South Dakota, they have provided rides for 387,954 veterans, logged 743,345 volunteer hours by drivers, who have driven 17,237,244 miles.

The DAV Hospital Transportation Network was started in Sioux Falls in 1984 and was used as a model in 1987 for a DAV National Program.

Currently DAV has twenty-five vehicles in South Dakota with locations in: Aberdeen, Belle Fourche, Brookings, Fort Thompson, Huron, Lake Andes, Madison, Milbank, Miller, Mitchell, Mobridge, Pierre, Rapid City, Redfield, Rosebud, Sioux City, Sioux Falls, Sisseton, Sturgis, Yankton, Watertown, Webster, and Winner.

The DAV has two hospital transportation service coordinators located at VA Black Hills Health Care System at VA Ft. Meade and VA Health Care System in Sioux Falls.



LOOK UP!

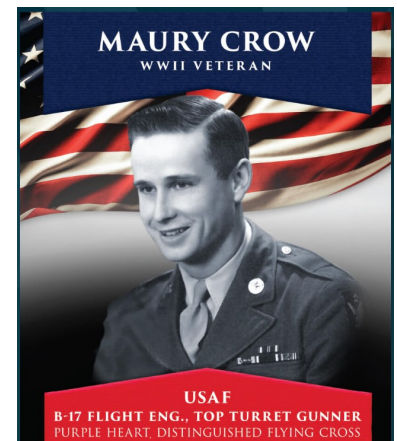
As you're traveling through Rapid City and Mitchell the best advice we can give you is "look up"!!!!

There are some great things happening in those communities.

Bill Casper, chairman of "Veterans Honor Banner Project" in Rapid City has been successful in securing funding to display 72 more veterans banners. Each banner depicts the names of veterans and their military branch. The banners were hung this week during a ribbon cutting ceremony Wednesday.

SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman was on hand for the ribbon cutting and commended Casper and his board for their recognition program for our heroes.

The Veterans Honor Banner Project was founded by Casper in 2017. At that time they were instrumental in hanging 18 banners honoring World War II veterans in downtown Rapid City. You can learn more about the program at <http://www.veteranshonorbannerproject.com/>.



Also, at noon on Friday, October 26, community leaders in Mitchell, South Dakota will dedicate the "2019 Salute to Military" murals. The murals feature scenes honoring each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces.

You can check out the corn cam at <https://cornpalace.com/157/Corn-Cam>



UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct 19—Open House new Spirit Lake CBOC—3:00 pm (CT)
 Oct 23—SD Veterans Council Meeting—PVA Headquarters (209 N. Garfield Ave.—Sioux Falls) - 10:00 am (CT)
 Nov 11—Veterans Day Community Program—Lincoln High School—Sioux Falls—10:30 am (CT)
 Nov 11—Veterans Day Last Call Ceremony—SFVAHCS—1:30 pm (CT)
 Nov 12—State Offices Closed
 Nov 16—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs —10:00 am (MT)
 Nov 16—Dakota Dunes CBOC Open House—2:00 pm (CT)
 Nov 22-23—State Offices Closed
 Dec 4—Governor’s Budget Address—State Capitol—1:00 pm (CT)
 Dec 10—Wreaths Across America Ceremony—Flaming Fountain Veterans Memorial—Pierre—11:00 am (CT)
 Dec 24-25—State Offices Closed
 Dec 31—Jan 1—State Offices Closed
 Jan 8—Governor’s State of the State—State Capitol—1:00 pm (CT)
 Jan 13-18—VFW Accredited Service Officer Training—Annapolis, MD
 Feb 8-10—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Holiday Inn—Spearfish
 Mar 3-7—VFW Legislative Conference
 July 20-24—National VFW Convention—Orlando, FL



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